

Washington, D.C. (Feb. 9, 2012)—Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, commended the Department of Defense today on its report evaluating the service of women in combat roles and on its announcement that it would open up more than 14,000 competitive jobs to allow women to serve in units co-located with direct ground combat units and at the battalion level in the Army, Marine Corps, and Navy.

“I am pleased that the Department has taken seriously the Military Leadership Diversity Commission’s recommendations and examined how restrictions on women in the military continue to impact their pathway to leadership ranks,” said Cummings. “Increasing opportunities for women in the military will serve as a force multiplier and ensure that we have the critical skills needed to fight our adversaries on every front.”

In 2008, Cummings worked with several Members of Congress, including Reps. James Clyburn, Hank Johnson, Kathy Castor, then-Rep. Kendrick Meek, and Senator Ben Cardin, to add a provision to the National Defense Authorization Act that created the Military Leadership Diversity Commission.

The Commission’s final report, which was issued on March 15, 2011, set forth 20 recommendations to help each branch of the Armed Forces develop and maintain qualified and diverse leadership. In June 2011, Cummings and Cardin [held a forum](#) on the Commission’s findings and recommendations.

Today’s report by the Department of Defense addresses a key recommendation by the Commission to eliminate the “combat exclusion policies” for women with a time-phased approach and eventually open additional career fields and units in direct ground combat to qualified women.